GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2736
ANSWERED ON:06.12.2000
ASSISTANCE TO ETHNIC INDIANS IN FIJI
TRILOCHAN KANUNGO

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of Ethnic Indians in Fiji are living in Sanctuary camps;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether they have been given refugee status;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not the reasons therefor; and

(e) the assistance being extended to them by the Indian Government?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

a) About 200 persons are living in a camp in Lautoka at present.
b) At the height of the disturbances in May and June this year, about 400 Indo-Fijians had shifted to this camp after they were terrorised, looted and their houses burnt in the strong-hold areas of the supporters of the coup leader George Speight. About half of these people have since returned to their homes.

c & d) No Sir. They do not meet international criteria for refugee status.

e) Since they have not been given refugee status, any assistance would amount to interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign country. In view of above, the question of assistance being provided by GOI does not arise.